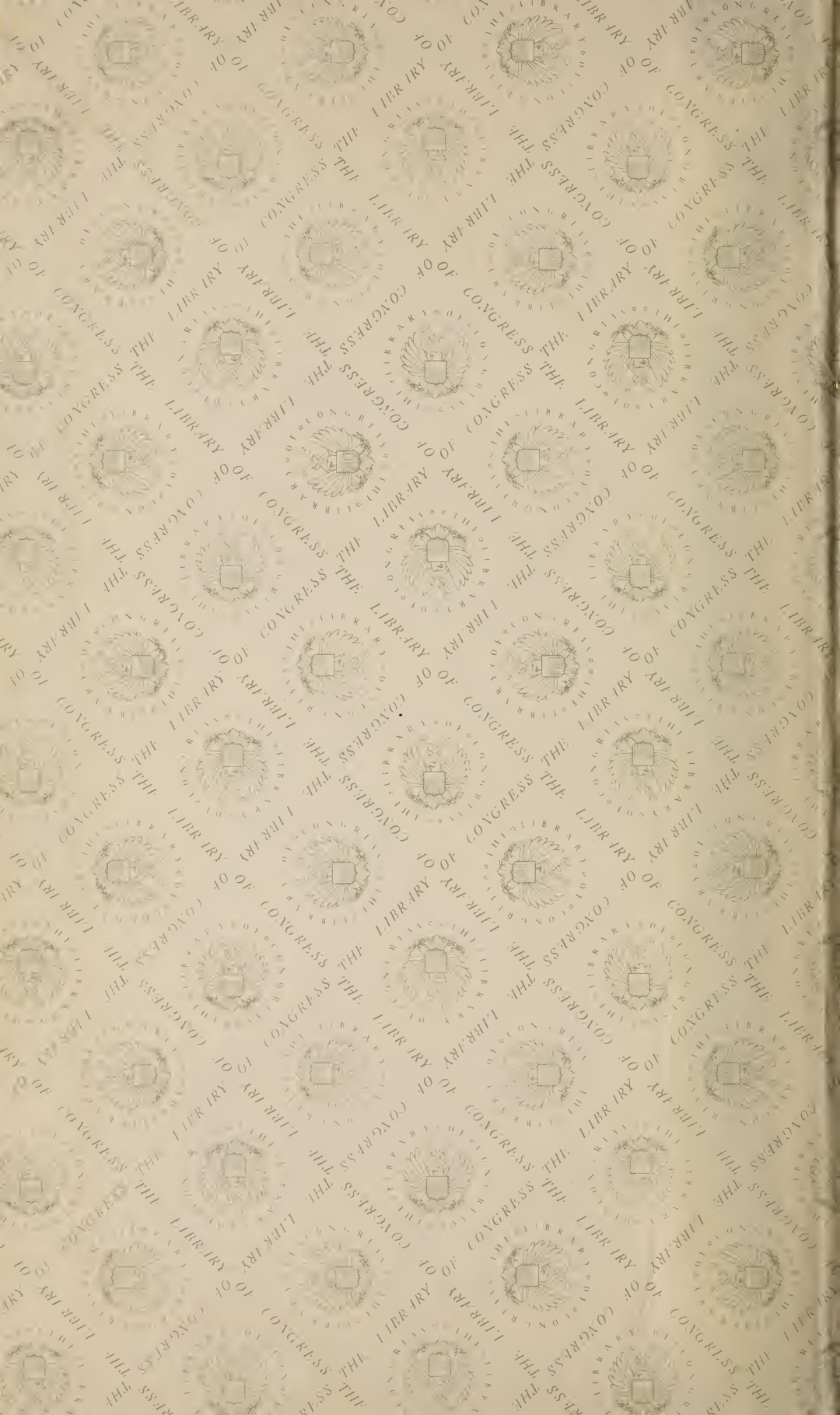


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AN ESSAY
ON
THE PLAY OF THE TEMPEST,

WITH
REMARKS ON THE SUPERSTITIONS OF THE MIDDLE AGES;
SOME ORIGINAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE CHARACTER OF
CALIBAN; WITH VARIOUS REFLECTIONS ON THE
WRITINGS AND GENIUS OF SHAKSPERE.

READ BEFORE THE SHAKSPERE CLUB,

6TH SEPTEMBER, 1839.

By P. MACDONNELL,

(Formerly President of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh)



London.

JOHN FELLOWES, 36, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD.

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The Play of THE TEMPEST, as it was last performed 3d June,
1839, at the Theatre Royal COVENT GARDEN, under the manage-
ment of

W. C. MACREADY, ESQ.

ALONZO KING OF NAPLES	MR. WARD.
SEBASTIAN (<i>his brother</i>)	MR. DIDDEAR.
PROSPERO (<i>the rightful Duke of Milan</i>) . .	MR. MACREADY.
ANTONIO (<i>his brother</i>)	MR. PHELPS.
FERDINAND (<i>son to the King of Naples</i>) . . .	MR. ANDERSON.
GONZALO	MR. WALDRON.
ADRIEN	MR. BENDER.
FRANCISCO	MR. C. J. SMITH.
CALIBAN (<i>a deformed slave</i>)	MR. G. BENNETT.
TRINCULO (<i>a jester</i>)	MR. HARLEY.
STEPHANO (<i>a drunken butler</i>)	MR. BARTLEY.
MIRANDA (<i>daughter to Prospero</i>)	MISS. H. FAUCIT.
ARIEL (<i>an airy spirit</i>)	MISS. P. HORTON.

Spirits in the Vision.

IRIS.—MRS. SERLE.

CERES—MISS. P. HORTON.

JUNO—MISS. RAINSFORTH.

The Music selected from the works of PURCELL, LINLEY, and DR.
ARNE, and arranged by MR. T. COOKE.

ON THE TEMPEST.

THE POET'S EYE, IN A FINE FRENZY ROLLING,
DOTH GLANCE FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH, FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN,
AND AS IMAGINATION BODIES FORTH
THE FORM OF THINGS UNKNOWN, THE POET'S PEN
TURNS THEM TO SHAPE, AND GIVES TO AIRY NOTHING
A LOCAL HABITATION, AND A NAME.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

It has been well observed, that the play of the *TEMPEST*, carries us beyond the limits of nature, without forsaking sense;—its enchantment no doubt has given to fiction all the appearance of reality; but the genius of poetry having now in modern times, left the abodes of supernatural beings, the poet revels no more, in those uncontrolled and boundless dominions of fancy. Shakspeare, however, wrote congenial to the period in which he lived; the lofty powers of his imagination knew no bounds, and in soaring far beyond the regions of terrestrial existence, to please the taste, and suit the prejudices of his day, he has given to the world, a magnificent proof, of the

extent of his genius, and has left behind him, a source of intellectual enjoyment, that will ever influence the heart of man, with the sweetest and tenderest emotions. The mental vigor displayed in the Tempest, furnishes a beautiful illustration of the powers of the human brain, and in a moral and poetical point of view, presents to us, scenes and events truly pleasing and instructive; but amidst all this grandeur and beauty, the calm spirit of philosophy, will ever have something to deplore, connected as it is, with a subject, which in its effects, has tended in former days, to promote great evil. Every age and country have had their superstitions, and though the belief in the existence of preternatural beings, has given birth to those inventions, from which poetry derives its highest distinctions, and created a sublimity of thought, and a nobleness of enthusiasm, that almost sanctifies the dreams of fiction,—yet the origin of those supernatural fancies, it must be admitted, can be traced to no other source than the extreme ignorance of the human mind. Mankind, in former ages, were entirely excluded from a knowledge of the operations of nature;—totally unacquainted with those principles of science, which distinguish the philosophy of the present day, they became the slaves of their own fears, and under the gloomy sway of that gothic darkness, which for centuries prevailed in Europe, every element was imagined the residence of a demon;—ghosts, goblins, and witches, were the terror of the world, the belief of which, entailed not only calamity and misery upon individuals,

but operated materially against the destiny of nations : the unhappy fate of the brave but unfortunate Maid of Orleans, one instance amongst many that could be recorded, while it awakens our sympathy, will ever remain an indelible stain upon the page of history. Even in the plenitude of ancient Rome, the influence of such belief guided the destinies of that great empire, as Plutarch tells us, that the energies of Marcus Brutus were greatly destroyed, by his having seen in his camp the ghost of Julius Cæsar, the night previous to the battle of Phillippi.

It would, however, be foreign to my purpose, to enter minutely into the history of the human mind, connected with superstition, the detail of which, will always present a durable monument of human folly ;—science has done much, in our day, to give to the aspect of human affairs, a very different character ; but, melancholy as it is to contemplate, the vestiges of ignorance and barbarism still surround us ;—there are men in these later times, who, endowed with much talent, have allowed their minds to be shackled with all the trammels of prejudice, and have indicated in their writings, a great reluctance to throw off the superstition of former ages :—Dr. Samuel Johnson and Sir Walter Scott are a lamentable proof of this, the latter implying, in his work on Demonology, that while a belief exists in the immortality of the soul, there will always be a prevalence of those opinions. Scott, however, never wrote as a philosopher ; his

ideas upon this subject are not to be relied on, having neither the impression of candour, nor the semblance of honesty ; his works certainly display great talent, combined with deep research ; but, throughout the vast range of his extensive productions, there is scarcely one sentiment to be found, which will secure to him, the praise of posterity, or show that his mind was ever imbued with that elevation of thought, to serve and promote the true interests of mankind. The strong love of life which is interwoven with the feelings of man, has made him look forward to an existence beyond the grave, and in approaching

That undiscover'd country, from whose bourne
No traveller returns ;

his mind, amidst the storms which on his wayward and troubled journey often assail him, is solaced by enjoying the prospect, of those scenes of future bliss, which he trusts, are awaiting him ;—the most virtuous of men, have in all past times, maintained the soul's immortality, and those of the present day, would, in all probability, feel themselves degraded, were we to impute to them, the belief of ghosts, and such other phantasies ;—the reasoning of Scott, is therefore untenable, as it is consolatory to know, that the progress of science and philosophy, is doing every thing to banish from the world such absurdities, those fancies of the mind being now, happily, confined only to that very illiterate portion of mankind, whose fate is so pathetically alluded to by the immortal Gray—

But knowledge to their eyes, her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll ;
Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Many of the principles of natural philosophy, were well known to the ancients, but the darkness and barbarism, which prevailed over Europe during the middle ages, threw the knowledge of those principles into obscurity, till the revival of learning again developed them. The elements of science in modern times, are, therefore, now so well understood, that to every well informed mind, those supernatural powers,⁽¹⁾ in the credence of which the energies of man for ages were paralyzed, have entirely vanished, and are looked upon in no other light, than the mere creation, of disordered imaginations. Our immortal poet, though he has in the *Tempest*, and other plays, brought forward those agencies, to give effect to the scenes which he drew, well knew that they did not exist in nature ;—his great and comprehensive mind, extended far beyond the prejudices of his time, for, when alluding to the Ghost of Hamlet, he very beautifully says—it was seen “in the mind’s eye,” an observation closely corresponding with the philosophy of the present day.

Dr. Hibbert, in a work of great merit, entitled “*A Theory of Apparitions*,” has satisfactorily illustrated, that many of those appearances, are often to be referred to disease ; the morbid feelings of the brain, creating under particular circumstances,

those phenomena, which have frequently led men, of otherwise shrewd, and accurate intelligence, to offer what they have considered, the most undoubted testimony, in behalf of supernatural existencies.

The age in which Shakspeare lived, though it can boast of a Bacon as a philosopher, and a Spenser as a poet, was overwhelmed with the darkest ignorance; indeed, we may form some idea, of the state of knowledge, among the people in general, when we know that James the First,⁽²⁾ as an author, advocated the belief of witchcraft; a circumstance, which perhaps, tended in some degree, to give to the superstitions of this country, that peculiar character, which, during the whole of the seventeenth century, unhappily disgraced its annals. Even the judges of the land, among whom was the celebrated Sir Matthew Hale, at that period condemned people to be burned alive, for what was denominated the crime of sorcery: among the thousands who suffered for these alleged crimes, we find it recorded in the criminal trials for Scotland,⁽³⁾ that one Margaret Laing, was burnt for being a witch, and having carnal knowledge with the devil! an accusation, corresponding with the same kind of superstition, which gave to Shakspeare the idea, that Sycorax, the mother of Caliban, had been guilty of the same crime; for Prospero observes, when accosting Caliban—

Come forth, thou poisonous slave,
Got by the devil himself upon thy wicked dam!

Witchcraft and sorcery can be traced to very remote periods, as many of the superstitions of the middle ages, had their origin in the mythology of the ancients; the character of them, undergoing in different countries, great changes. Tacitus informs us, that among the German tribes, sorcery held such a sway over this barbarous people, that the supposed possessors of it, rose to the highest rank in their councils, and even obtained a share in the direction of their armies: in latter times it lost that influence, and while it formed a source of romance, and fiction to the poet, it unfortunately gave birth to laws, which, originating out of ignorance, and cruelty, produced among mankind, the most direful consequences.

To pursue this theme further, would only create to the reflecting mind, sensations of no satisfactory nature; for, whether we direct our attention, in these rude ages, to the general events of life, or to the records of legislation, connected with the history of kings, and courts, we find mankind sunk, and degraded, by the withering powers of superstition. The dawn of science, and literature, however, appeared amidst (what has been termed) "the glories of the maiden reign," and emanations of great brilliancy, about this period, began to dispel those mists, which had so long enveloped in darkness the human mind. Men prompted to intellectual exertion, by the revival of letters, and agitated by the religious revolutions of the times—the splendour of the poet, with the deep thought

of the philosopher, were excited into action, whilst the drama, awakening from its slumbers, possessed, in no small degree, in giving to the struggle, between ignorance and knowledge, that character, which led Dr. Johnson, justly to say—

When learning's triumph, o'er her barb'rous foes,
First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakspeare rose !

Our illustrious bard, therefore, under circumstances quite uncongenial to the more advanced periods of literature, wrote for a people, emerging from the barbarism of former ages, and adapting his dramas to the spirit of the times, the efforts of his sublime and noble genius, gave to the world, the splendid, romantic, and beautiful play of the Tempest.

It is admitted by all commentators upon the writings of Shakspeare, that this drama, was among the last of our author's productions, though no one, has been able positively, to discover, the romance upon which it is founded.⁽⁴⁾ In the composition of the Tempest, Shakspeare seems to have been well aware, of the advantages, which the ancient poets, derived from popular superstition, and in the exertions of his poetic genius, he has boldly called forth the magic spells, of that supernatural power, so peculiar to the credulity of the age, in which he lived ;—amidst the most exquisite beauties of classic literature, he leads us into all the romance of poetic fable, and manages his scenery with such skill and judgment, as to give to fictitious existence, the air and appearance of

reality : it is in the perusal of this remarkable production, that we for a time, forget the influence of reason and philosophy, and willingly give ourselves up, to all the pleasures of the sweetest delusion.

Prospero, the leading character of the play, is endowed with the power of a magician, and in the possession of a mind, enriched by wisdom and great learning, he is enabled to accomplish those virtuous ends, which his exalted and generous views so nobly contemplated. The incidents are interwoven with the powers of enchantment ; but the development of the plot, displays one of the most impressive, and affecting lessons of moral feeling, that is to be found, in the whole range of dramatic poetry.

The story of this drama, is founded upon certain circumstances, connected with the life of Prospero, Duke of Milan ; Anthonio his brother, usurping the dukedom, by the instigation of Alonzo, king of Naples, Prospero, with his daughter Miranda, are compelled to seek refuge in an uninhabited island. After a residence there of twelve years, Prospero, by the powers of his magic, raises a storm, whereby Anthonio, the usurper, with Alonzo, Ferdinand his son, and Sebastian his brother, with other attendants, are shipwrecked upon the island during the tempest. By a concatenation of strange and interesting events, Prospero is enabled to bring within his reach Anthonio, and the rest

of the conspirators ; with great magnanimity of mind, Prospero disdains to seek revenge for the injuries he had suffered ; the generosity of his character forgives them ; he betroths his daughter Miranda to Ferdinand, and ultimately resolves, to leave the Enchanted Isle, to solemnize the nuptials of Ferdinand and Miranda at Naples ; while, during his remaining days, he is to enjoy the Dukedom of Milan. Though the source from which Shakspeare has taken the incidents, upon which he has built the structure of the “ Tempest ” is still a matter of conjecture, Italy however, is the spot, which has given birth, to the personages with whom we meet in its story ; that beautiful country, once fertile with the stores of science and literature, the remembrance of which, amidst the desolation that now exists, only awakens in our minds, the most mournful recollections ;—this land of literature and science, has, therefore, given to Shakspeare, the opportunity of endowing Prospero, with all those qualities of learning, which encircle his character ; and, hence, we find, in the deep solitude, that surrounded him in the Enchanted Isle, he, unlike the moralizing Jacques, in “ As you like it,” while in banishment in the Forest of Arden, did not,

Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time ;
nor sought,

To find sermons in stones,
nor,
Books in the running brooks ;

but, with a mind, cultivated by all the liberal arts, and in the possession of a library, that he tells us, his good friend Gonzalo had furnished him, and which he prized above his dukedom, he was enabled, by the power of his enchantment, to carry out effectually his bold and generous designs.

The Play opens with a ship at sea, exposed to all the horrors of a tempest; thunder and lightning prevail, and ultimately the vessel is dashed upon the shore of the Enchanted Island. We have in this scene, every thing which can convey to us, the dreadful calamities of a shipwreck: the boatswain and master, like brave sailors, exhibiting all those characteristics of cool and undaunted courage, amidst the dangers that surround them; whilst the conduct of the passengers, viz. Alonzo, Sebastian, Anthonio, Ferdinand, and others, the good Gonzalo excepted, display that fear and dread, which a storm at sea, seldom fails to create, among those, not accustomed to the rage and fury of this element. The poet has drawn the scene with his wonted power, and it has been remarked, that in the naval dialogue of the mariners, it is the first example of sailors' language, being exhibited on the stage.

The subsequent events of the play, are laid in the Enchanted Island; and the scene which opens to our view, after the shipwreck, is pregnant with deep interest. It is before the cell of Prospero, where first we meet with him and his daughter

Miranda;—influenced by all those high and tender emotions, which render Miranda a gem of purity and excellence, we behold her, imploring her father to allay the roar of the wild waters, under the belief, that he, by his art, had raised the storm, and that all on board had perished; and in a strain of great beauty, and tenderness, she exclaims—

O! I have suffer'd,
With those that I saw suffer! a brave vessel,
Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
Dash'd all to pieces: O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls! they perished.
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or 'ere
It should the good ship so have swallow'd, and
The freighting souls within her.

These are the sentiments of a noble mind, inspired by every feeling of compassion and humanity, and impress us, with a high idea, how beautifully, Shakspeare could pourtray the passions of the human heart; lovely and gentle in her nature, Miranda is one of those beings of woman-kind, that the graphic powers of Shakspeare, have been so successful in delineating; he has throughout the play, drawn the daughter of Prospero, in the possession of all those qualities, mingled with sweet affection, which give to her sex, that benign and potent influence, of subduing and controlling the heart of man, amidst the ruder feelings of his character; for, like other great poets, our immortal bard has shown, that woman, lovely wo-

man, was made to harmonize our souls; to render the rugged path of existence more easy, and create to domestic happiness, those scenes, which tend,

————— to animate the bliss,
And sweeten all the toils of human life.

Prospero, moved, in no ordinary degree, by the virtue of Miranda, tells her to be of good comfort,

The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touch'd
The very virtue of compassion in thee;
I have, with such provision in mine art,
So safely order'd, that there is no soul,—
No, not so much perdition as an hair,
Betid to any creature in the vessel,
Which thou heard'st cry—which thou saw'st sink.

Having thus soothed the fears of Miranda, Prospero takes the opportunity of unfolding to her, the events of his life, the power and nature of his enchantment, and the circumstances which led him, to become the inhabitant of the Enchanted Isle: his mind soured by misfortune, appears, amidst the gentleness of his nature, stern and severe; there are, however, with this austerity, a perfection of virtue, and a nobleness of design, that render him truly exalted;—devoted to the care and instruction of his daughter, he is deeply absorbed in her happiness; for, says Prospero,

Since in this island we arriv'd,
Here have I, thy school master, made thee more profit,
Than other princes can, that have more time,
For vainer hours, and tutors not so careful.

a passage, which at once conveys to us, the excellence of Prospero, as a parent, and his independence as a man; impressed with the importance of those duties, which devolve upon parents, in regard to a correct education for their children, our poet here, throws out a censure upon those, who, influenced by the power of fashion, allow the minds of their offspring, to be formed, by preceptors, that in their avocations, often overlook the interesting charge, of forming and directing the heart, to those sentiments and maxims, which always serve, as the best guidance to moral virtue. Colleges and universities, may give, what is termed a liberal education, but without the mind, is early and deeply imbued, with those principles of moral science, which can be reduced to great simplicity, all the learning of the schools, will never constitute that knowledge, so essentially necessary to promote human happiness;—in our intercourse with life, we not unfrequently meet with men, who, in the possession of every accomplishment of scholastic learning, are totally destitute of the ties of moral obligation, and to trace the source of such turpitude, we can only do it, by referring ourselves, to that system of education, which stores the memory, and informs the understanding, without animating and purifying the heart; “a knowledge of words, rather than of things, is taught,” and it is lamentable to contemplate, to use the language of the Rev. J. A. Emerton, of Hanwell, whose excellent observations, upon this subject, are the offspring, of that genuine philo-

sophy, which inspires the breast of every intelligent and virtuous man, "that possessing the treasures of ancient wisdom, and instructed by the experience of all past ages, it must be solely owing to an inattention to moral facts, that modern education has not been able to effect considerable improvement in the human character;" under the tuition, of a man like Prospero, we therefore find Miranda endowed by every quality, which excite our minds, with the most lively emotions for her well-being;—towards the close of this interesting scene, we still behold her agitated by the remembrance of the wreck, soliciting from her father, the reason for raising the storm, to which Prospero replies,

Know thus far forth,—

By accident most strange, bountiful fortune,

Now my dear lady, hath mine enemies,

Brought to this shore : and by my prescience,

I find my zenith doth depend upon

A most auspicious star ; whose influence,

If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes

Will ever after droop.—Here cease more questions :

Thou art inclin'd to sleep ; 'tis a good dullness,

And give it way.—I know thou can'st not choose.

This sleep is brought upon Miranda, by the art of Prospero, in order, that he may hear from Ariel, how his commands have been disposed of. The spirit Ariel, in conformity to the belief of the superstition of Shakspeare's time, belonged to the regions of the air ; the spirits of which element, were considered less malignant and mischievous than those who took up their abode on the earth.

Ariel, therefore, in his character, is mild and gentle, and being for a period, enslaved to the will of the Enchanter, performs the commands of Prospero, with willingness and dexterity;—in this interview, Ariel gives a fearful description of the tempest; but relates the safety of all on board, in the following manner,

Not a hair perish'd—

On their sustaining garments, not a blemish,
But fresher than before, and, as thou bad'st me,
In troops I have dispers'd them 'bout the isle :
The king's son have I landed by himself;
Whom I left cooling of the air with sighs
In an odd angle of the isle. —————

After receiving the orders of Prospero, to appear shortly again to him, in the shape of a sea-nymph, Ariel departs, when Miranda at this moment awakes; and here we meet with Caliban, a creature in his nature, possessing all the rude elements of the savage, yet maintaining in his mind, a strong resistance to that tyranny, which held him in the thralldom of slavery: Caliban creates our pity, more than our detestation. This “rude uncouth monster,” as he is generally termed by some of the commentators of Shakspeare, it should be remembered, is seen only in this scene, free from the influence of those intoxicating wines, given him by Trinculo and Stephano; and, certainly, amidst the intemperance, in which he so freely indulges, we see awakened in him, all the worst passions of savage life. We learn, however, in this first introduction to Caliban, that the policy of Prospero,

led him to impart, to this unhappy slave a knowledge of language; but deeply impressed with the cruel usage he receives, Caliban remarks to Prospero—

You taught me language—and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse; the red-plague⁽⁵⁾ rid you
For learning me your language!

a rebuke, which Prospero evidently seems, at a loss, how to answer. Shakspeare has drawn Caliban, rude as he is, with feelings of strong aversion to slavery, and it is with the view of destroying the bondage under which he labours, that urges him, in an after part of the play, to form the plot against the life of Prospero: refusing, however, at this interview, to obey the commands of Prospero, Caliban is threatened to be racked, with old cramps, and his bones to be filled with aches,

————— so as to make him roar,
That beasts shall tremble at his din—

The scene excites much interest, and, at all events, developes some very favorable marks, in the character of Caliban, who seems to feel keenly, the severe terms of reproach—as when he is addressing Prospero, when alluding to his more early residence in the island, he says—

————— When thou came'st first,
Thou stroak'dst, and mad'st much of me, would'st give me
Water with berries in't; and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night: *and then I lov'd thee,*

*And shew'd thee all the qualities o' the isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place, and fertile.*

an artless and simple narration, which certainly indicates much kind feeling. Prospero, however, replies, that he used Caliban with human care, and *lodged him in his cell,*

————— Till he did seek, to violate
The honor of his child.—————

a circumstance, which though it renders Caliban guilty, can never justify the conduct of Prospero, in such harsh and cruel treatment, for, it ought to be kept in view, that this wild and untutored creature, was imprudently placed enough in the way, to enable him, to make the attempt complained of: the noble and generous character of Prospero, therefore suffers, by this severe conduct to Caliban, and I confess, I have never read, or witnessed this scene, without experiencing a degree of pity, for the poor, abject, and degraded slave.

The part of Caliban, has generally been exhibited on the stage, in a manner, so as to excite feelings, almost approaching to a painful *and disagreeable kind*; but it has remained for the excellence of Mr. G. Bennett, to delineate, the rude and uncultivated savage, in a style, which arouses our sympathies, in behalf of those, whose destiny, it has never been, to enjoy the advantages of civilization. Caliban, amidst the rudeness of his nature, and possessing an exterior, ugly and misshapen, will always, however, create attention;—stimulated to revenge, by the severity he suffers,

he has withal, qualities of a redeeming character. The study of the part, therefore, requires both energy and judgment;—the task is one of great difficulty, but Mr. Bennett, by his just conception of it, has arrived at the acme of his art, and no one, who has witnessed his performance, of this “creature of Shakspeare’s imagination,” but must have acknowledged, the unrivalled talents, which have guided him to so much success. The arduous performance of Caliban, has secured to this excellent actor, the well-merited applause of many an enlightened audience;—the spontaneous tribute of praise, that affords a strong proof, of the truth of these observations—for by the judgment of an unprejudiced public, and not of false and self-interested criticism, the merits of every performer should be ultimately decided.

Some of the characters drawn by Shakspeare, were never altogether understood, till the excellence of the histrionic art developed them. Mr. Bennett has given a true picture of Caliban—Shylock, in the Merchant of Venice, was never comprehended correctly, till Macklin showed by his acting, that the deadly spirit of revenge, which actuated the Jew, was inconsistent with the style of comedy;—this great actor, was the first, who performed Shylock, as a tragic character, and which led the celebrated Pope, to exclaim, when witnessing the performance,

This is the Jew,
Which Shakspeare drew.

In our day, the tragic powers, which Edmund Kean so eminently possessed, led him to pourtray the tyrant Richard, in a manner, very different from that, which influenced the acting of Garrick, Cooke, and Kemble;—the scene between Richard and Anne, was, by these actors, always exhibited, so as to excite in their audience, ridicule and laughter, as it was imagined, that Richard, with all his deformity, both of mind and body, making love to a woman, whose husband he had murdered, was perfectly incongruous:—Shakspeare was blamed for drawing a scene, not in unison with nature;—Kean showed, however, that it was identified with truth, for in his approach to Lady Anne, his voice assumed all the tone and melody of love, and with the flattery which is used, the unhappy Anne, falls into the snare, laid for her, by the heartless and deep designing Richard. Shakspeare knew that, “*Flattery is the key which opens the wicket of the female heart,*” and the fine acting of Kean, rendered a scene, which before his time, was deemed unnatural, congenial to the probabilities of human life, and consistent with all the rules of dramatic art.

The first act of the *Tempest*, embodies much of the design of Prospero;—his chief object, being the marriage of his daughter Miranda, with young Ferdinand, and to secure this point, he instructs his spirit Ariel, to conduct Ferdinand to the sight of Miranda, and dispose his mind to the influence of love, while Prospero, prepares his daughter, to

be impressed with the same sentiments. Ariel takes the opportunity of conveying to Ferdinand, in a song accompanied with sweet music, the news of his father's death, as it was necessary, the young couple, should be betrothed, before the knowledge of it came to Alonzo, for engaging Ferdinand, without the consent of his father, would have rendered the designs of Prospero more difficult; we have, therefore, a very interesting scene where Miranda discovers Ferdinand, whom she supposes a spirit, but Prospero informs her,

— This gallant, which thou see'st,
Was in the wreck; and, but his something stain'd
With grief, (that's beauty's canker), thou might'st call him
A goodly person; he hath lost his fellows,
And strays about to find them.

The interview, between Ferdinand and Miranda is beautifully drawn, and displays great power in Shakspeare's knowledge of human nature:—Miranda's affections are soon won,—Ferdinand communicates his birth, and quality, but not before Prospero shows to the lover of Miranda, some rough usage, lest he should think his prize too lightly gained—accordingly, in an after part of the play, we find Ferdinand employed in the piling of logs, the labor of which, seems to distract the tender feelings of Miranda:—Prospero being in the distance, Ferdinand breathes to her “his soul in love,” while she, with all the simplicity of a child of nature, ingeniously proffers herself, as the wife of her beloved Ferdinand, and in this ex-

change of sentiment, we have one of those fine and exquisite touches of nature, as Stevens very justly remarks, which distinguishes Shakspeare, from all other writers, when Miranda says,

I am a fool !
To weep at what I am glad of.

she being unconscious, that the excess of joy, and the extremity of grief, not unfrequently bring relief by a flood of tears.

In the first scene of the second act, we meet with Alonzo, Sebastian, Anthonio, Gonzalo, and others, contemplating their unhappy fate, and pondering over the dangers they have encountered ;—Gonzalo makes some interesting remarks, whilst Alonzo regrets his voyage to Tunis, which was, for the object of marrying his daughter Claribel, to an African Prince ; he bewails the loss of his son Ferdinand, whom he supposes drowned, and amidst the desolation around them, Gonzalo offers some curious views, upon the form of government, which he would adopt, were he to have the sovereignty of the island.

I' th' commonwealth, I would by contraries
Execute all things ; for no kind of traffick
Would I admit ; no name of magistrate ;
Letters should not be known ; wealth, poverty,
And use of service, none ; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, olives, none ;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil ;
No occupation ; all men idle, all,
And women too, but innocent and pure—
No sovereignty.

All things in common should produce
Without sweat or endeavor ; treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
Would I not have ; but nature should bring forth,
Of its own kind, all foyzon, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people.

These observations of the old councillor, as it has been justly observed by Dr. Warburton, have evidently been introduced by Shakspeare, as a satire, upon the Utopian treatises of government, though among the ancient Spartans, efforts were made to reduce human society, to a state, approaching to the simplicity, which is here alluded to—hence it is, that these philosophers and law-givers, Minos, Plato, and Lycurgus, have been by the admirers of such a system, ranked amongst its adherents :—in modern times, those illustrious men, Sir Thomas More, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Mably, are likewise named among its supporters, and who, in their speculations on governments, affecting human happiness, have argued ingeniously, in behalf of this social condition of mankind, uncongenial, however, as it appears with the habits and feelings of our nature. (6)

Amidst the many pleasing, and agreeable events of this play, the scene before us, however, gives a sad picture, and a woful specimen, of the degradation which we not unfrequently meet with, in the records of human action ; Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, a noble and generous character, devoting himself to the study of those

pursuits, which would have tended to promote knowledge amongst his people, is pounced upon, by his brother Anthonio, aided by Alonzo, King of Naples, and under the most profound confidence, which the generous Prospero reposed in them, he, with his daughter, a child at this period, of the tender age of three years, are seized, put into a boat, so crazy in its condition, without sails, or masts,—so rotten, that,

“ The very rats instinctively had quit it,”

and there, some leagues at sea, left to the mercy of the wild and tempestuous ocean. This conspiracy, diabolical as it appears, is perfectly in accordance with the treachery, that is exhibited in the scene, about to be described, the passage in the commencement of which, having formed the source of the foregoing observations.

We left the good Gonzalo, speculating upon the form of government, which he wished to adopt in the island, but these speculations, had of course no effect, upon the party, to whom they were addressed;—the mild and gentle Ariel, appears at this juncture, playing solemn music : Gonzalo falls into a heavy sleep, and Alonzo feeling himself overcome, gives way also to excessive drowsiness ; but not till he receives the assurance of Anthonio and Sebastian, that they will be his guard, and save him from all harm. The base Sebastian and Anthonio, taking advantage of this occurrence, enter into a plot, to murder Alonzo,

and the others, with the view of Sebastian gaining the throne of Naples. Shakspeare has drawn the scene with his usual vigor, and which conveys, to us, some remembrance, of the horror, which seizes our minds, when the ambitious tyrant Macbeth, murders Duncan in his sleep;—the language of these assassins, is truly appropriate to their dark conceptions, and shows the distrust, which villains always hold, towards each other, before they fully join in compact, to accomplish their wicked designs: at the moment they are about to plunge their swords, into the breasts of their intended victims, the interposition of Ariel saves them: Gonzalo awakes, discovers the treachery, and quickly informs Alonzo of his danger. The scene terminates by Ariel, saying,

Prospero, my lord, shall know what I have done,
So king go safely on, and seek thy son.

I cannot, however, close my remarks, connected with these events, without alluding to a passage of Anthonio's, when he is speaking of Claribel, Queen of Tunis,

—————She that dwells
Ten leagues beyond man's life,
A space, where every cubit,
Seems to cry out—*How shall that Claribel*
Measure us back to Naples.

This is evidently a mere poetical fancy of Shakspeare's, for no one, will suppose, that our author, was so ignorant, as not to know, that Naples was

separated from Tunis, only by the breadth of the Mediterranean sea, yet, a writer of great note, gravely assures us, that this is one instance, amongst many, of Shakspeare's ignorance of geography, when he supposes Tunis and Naples, to have been at such an immeasurable distance from each other. The same imputation has been made by various writers; it is, however, to be regretted, that a commentator like Steevens, should have fallen into such a prejudice, an author, otherwise distinguished for the many excellent observations, which he has made upon the writings of Shakspeare.

The vast and comprehensive view of the customs and manners of ancient states, connected with his minute description of countries, situated in the most remote regions of the earth, render it highly improbable, that Shakspeare, was in any way deficient, in this department of human knowledge. Indeed, Mr. Pope, when alluding to his great acquirements, remarks, "Whatever object of nature, or branch of science he either speaks of or describes, it is always with competent, if not extensive learning." Mr. Theobald, notwithstanding these considerations, also finds fault with the geographical information of our author, and accuses him of gross absurdity, in the play of the Two Gentlemen of Verona; where Valentine, is said to travel from Milan to Verona by sea;—the reason however, of all this confusion, as Dr. Johnson very justly observes, seems to be, "That he took his story from a novel, which he sometimes fol-

lowed, and sometimes forsook, sometimes remembered, and sometimes forgot."

We, therefore, in considering this subject, should always keep in view, how much the text of Shakspeare, from a variety of typographical errors⁽⁷⁾ and other inaccuracies has been damaged, the interpolation of the players of his time, having, by an undue interference, altered the meaning and construction of many passages. Unconscious of his great genius, and careless of future fame, Shakspeare, some years before he died, retired to his native place, and left his works, to be carried down the stream of time, without even an effort, on his part, to collect them: ⁽⁸⁾—they, however, have become imperishable, and, though errors, and some apparent absurdities, are occasionally to be met with, arising out of those causes to which I have just alluded, the volumes of this great poet will ever be cherished, as those bright gems of literature, "which the human heart endear;" whilst the power and capacity of his intellect, shall continue to be estimated to an extent, that we may freely assert, without any exaggeration, to quote from a modern biographer, "a man may hope,"

To rival all but Shakspeare's name below.

In the delineation of character, where dignity of language, and purity of feeling, are required, no writer has ever surpassed Shakspeare: the beauty of his diction, the elegance of his style,

in unison, with the sublimity of his conception, never fail to create in our minds, thoughts of the most exalted kind ; and we rise from the perusal of his works, always impressed, with sentiments, which give us the strongest attachment to virtue : we are influenced by the mighty powers of his genius, and are forcibly carried, into that current of admiration, to consider him, not only an illustrious poet, but one of the greatest moral philosophers that ever lived. He fathomed the deep recesses of the human heart, and penetrated into the feelings of our nature, with a minuteness and accuracy, which leave us in wonder, when we contemplate the magnitude of those powers, with which he was endowed, beyond all other men.

In that excellent advice, of Polonius to Laertes, in which are embodied, those maxims which never should be lost sight of, in our progress through life, Shakspeare arrives at the basis of all moral feeling, when alluding to the passion of self-love, a passion which, if properly regulated, really becomes one of the first of virtues ; for, he who is guided by it correctly, will not only secure his own happiness, but endeavour to extend a portion of it, to all his fellow creatures around him. Pope says, “ Self-love is the spring of all human action ;” but differing very materially from the cold philosophy of Rochefoucault, the author of the *Essay on Man*, qualifies the assertion, by justly observing, that self-love and social are the same : it is this feeling to which Shakspeare

alludes, when the old courtier, Polonius, tells his son,

*This, above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night, the day,
Thou can'st not then be false to any man.*

Yet, notwithstanding this praise, so justly extended to our bard, regarding his character, as a moralist, we have authors, of the present day, enjoying a high distinction in letters, gravely telling us, that Shakspeare, in his writings, frequently sacrifices virtue to convenience, and that, in the plots of his plays, he generally keeps no moral purpose in view;—*a fault, they say, the barbarity of the age cannot extenuate*⁽⁹⁾. If Shakspeare do not allow the design of his plots, to be frustrated, by the connexion of moral relation, the evil that results from vice, is however, not disregarded, though the *denouement* of his plots, bring about no *studied* moral; his delineations of life, are congenial to nature; he describes the events of human action, agreeable to the history, from which he forms his dramas, and, therefore, when a virtuous character is brought forward, we universally find precepts maintained, that have a tendency, to promote virtue; while, on the other hand, when vice is beheld “in its own image,” in the picture of such men as Anthonio and Sebastian, we then see it, presented to us, as the language of Pope, has it,

———— A monster of such horrid mein,
That to be hated, needs only to be seen.

The false and fastidious criticism of modern authors, has led them into observations, connected with the writings of Shakspeare, that bespeak, neither a correct taste, nor a generous feeling—" *to please was his chief object*," and, that he paid no attention to that retributive justice, which pervades all human affairs, are remarks, echoed by these stern and frigid moralists; a censure, truly unmerited, and which indicates, a total ignorance of that philosophy of mind, which guided the pen of our immortal poet, in all his dramatic productions: it is true, amidst the excellence of moral feeling, which is to be found in the works of Shakspeare, blemishes and defects, of no ordinary nature, exist: the age in which he lived, was noted for its licentiousness, and if, in various passages, the style and language of his composition, with the gross allusions, which are occasionally to be met with, be in accordance with the character of that period, the consideration, that he wrote for a people, rude and indelicate in their manners, should disarm criticism from that severity, which some authors, of the present day, have so ungenerously bestowed upon him. Our admiration, for the genius of Shakspeare, cannot obviate these imperfections, but it may justify us, in the task of vindicating him, from the imputation, of his being of all writers of his time, "the Coryphæus of obscenity;" an accusation, entirely groundless, when we know, that he had, for his cōtemporaries, (and who, it is mournful to contemplate, were the fellow associates of Shakspeare, during his early

career in London,) such unfortunate men of genius, as the profligate and abandoned Robert Greene, the licentious and worthless George Peele, with the dissolute, but elegant poet, Christopher Marlowe; nay, even the learned--the classical Ben Johnson, is not exempt, in his works, from the vices and follies of that period; and, with the same feeling of justice, should have had his share of reproof, but, as we are told, that this excellent scholar died, full of contrition, for his manifold transgressions, of impiety and indecency, he, forsooth, escapes censure, while Shakspeare, having sunk into the grave, without leaving behind him, any record of repentance, the lash of criticism is extended to our illustrious bard, in those unmeasured terms, which all, guided by candour and frankness, never can sanction.

In the scenes where the higher emotions of the soul, are called into action, Shakspeare is truly grand, but he is equally powerful, when he attempts to delineate those characters, which excite the lighter feelings of merriment and humour; where every sentence is a laugh, "to clapping theatres, and shouting crowds," to make, as the poet, Blair, has it,

—————E'en thick lipp'd musing Melancholy
Gather up her face into a smile
Before she is aware.

Trinculo, a jester, and Stephano, a drunken butler, who appear in the Tempest, are characters

of this description ;—the comic humour, and excessive drollery, exhibited in the scene, where they meet with Caliban, make us, for a time, forget the more sombre incidents of the play ;—their wit, their jests, and their merriment, are well given, and afford a strong illustration, that the master-mind of Shakspeare, exceeds all other authors, whether in portraying the sportive and pleasing pictures of comedy, or drawing the more sublime and imposing scenes of tragedy. Mrs. Montaguè, a learned and elegant authoress, when refuting Voltaire, in his unjust attack, upon the writings, of our much admired bard, very truly says, “ that Voltaire has never taken into account, that Shakspeare has written the best comedy in our language ; that the same man should have had such variety of talents, as to have produced Macbeth, and the Merry Wives of Windsor, is astonishing. Where is there an instance, among the ancients, or moderns, of one poet writing the sublime, and pathetic, the boldest invention of fiction, and the most just and accurate delineation of characters, and also possessing, the *vis comica*, in its highest perfection ? ”

In the scene, to which I have alluded, Stephano and Trinculo get drunk, and Caliban, partaking deeply in their potations, each of them become, in their own estimation, a hero, verifying the old adage, “ He that is drunk, is as great as a king.” Under these *heroic* impressions, they conspire against the life of Prospero ;—the powers of the Magician, however, set to nought, their con-

piracy, and the punishment that follows, is very humourously alluded to, mingled as it is, with a great deal of severity.

In Hamlet, we have a very witty expression of the Grave Digger, regarding the character of the English nation, and, in this droll and ludicrous scene, where Trinculo discovers Caliban, Shakspeare takes the same opportunity of being satirical ;—the facetious jester exclaims, “ What have we here ? a man or a fish.—A strange fish ; were I in England now (as once I was), and had this fish painted, not a holiday-fool there, but would give a piece of silver ; there would this monster make a man,—any strange beast there makes a man ; when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian.” This is correctly true ; the desire of seeing strange sights, still strongly prevails among the English people, and which, coupled with their great credulity, give an amusing proof, how far our unequalled bard is right, in the delineation of their character.

Shakspeare’s felicity, in giving to the Muse of Comedy, that brilliancy of wit, which will ever be unrivalled, has been somewhat exemplified in the scenes, just now alluded to. From the days of the celebrated Edward Alleyn, our stage has been adorned by the comic powers of not a few, who, by their art, have given to the lighter characters of the drama, that spirit and animation, which purely belong to them ; none, however, have sur-

passed, in excellence, that eminent actor of the present day, Mr. Harley, who, in his representation of Trinculo, seems truly to be influenced with the same inspiration, as that which guided the genius of our great poet ;—chaste and correct, in all his performances, Mr. Harley never oversteps the boundaries of nature :—in the progress of his professional career, he has always formed a striking contrast, to those, who, in our time, catering to the vitiated taste of the vulgar, have gained notoriety, by assuming, in the place of genuine comedy, all the antic-tricks of wild grimace, and low buffoonery.

In alluding to the excellence of Mr. Harley in Trinculo, I cannot here omit, the manly and dignified deportment exhibited by Mr. Macready, in the character of Prospero ; the delineation of which, was quite in accordance, with those powers, that have justly ranked, this great actor, as the first tragedian of the day ;—Miss Helen Faucit presented us, with a beautiful picture of Miranda, whose interesting qualities, were pourtrayed with a delicacy of feeling, that reflects great lustre upon those high attainments, which hitherto have distinguished the career of this talented and accomplished actress ;—whilst in the mild and gentle Ariel, by Miss P. Horton, we, for a time, forgot the realities of life, by being transported into all the fancies of the sweetest delusion ; the songs of Ariel were given by this chaste and elegant performer, in a style, which enhanced to

a great degree, the wild enchantment of the scenery;—with this concentration of talent, combined with the admirable representation of Ferdinand, by Mr. Anderson, with the comic humour displayed by Mr. Bartley as Stephano, it perhaps will be no exaggeration to say, that the play of the *Tempest*, was never, at any former period, brought forward, with more advantage, than when it was last performed, upon the boards of Covent Garden Theatre. While the stage is appropriated to the real purposes of the drama, which should always, *veluti in speculum*, portray the passions and manners of life, it must ever be regarded, as the highest intellectual amusement, which the human mind can enjoy;—let it therefore, be held sacred to genius;—let not our theatres, in future, be polluted, by those scenes, that lately disgraced them; let us protest against that base and sordid feeling, which would ultimately convert the British stage, into an arena of wild beasts, unfitted even for the pastime of holiday fools; awakening to our imagination, the worst days of ancient Rome, when the people, engulphed in licentious barbarism, preferred the brutal exhibition of gladiators, to the more graceful and refined efforts, of those, whose noble task was,

To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
To raise the genius, and to mend the heart,
To make mankind in conscious virtue bold,
Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold.

As we advance in the play, we find Prospero

availing himself of the dark secrets of his magic spells, in order to promote his ulterior views, and we here see, with what advantage, Shakspeare brings forward, those preternatural beings, who do not act, merely as subordinate agents, but always, as objects, conducive to the developement of his story; shewing, as an elegant authoress remarks, that our poet has, in this respect, entered more into theatrical propriety, than the Greek tragedians;—the direful character, which the superstitions of his country possessed, has also given, to Shakspeare, a greater degree of superiority, over the ancient drama. In the scene which we now enter upon, we meet again with Alonzo, and his companions; and, though we have not the horror, which is inspired by the Witches in Macbeth, performing their fearful incantations upon the blasted heath, nor the pale and melancholy Ghost of Hamlet, at the midnight hour, visiting the glimpses of the moon, making “night hideous,” by revealing a deed of murder, yet the supernatural powers of Ariel, subject to the command of Prospero, are sufficient to create terror and dismay to Alonzo, and his followers;—their ears are saluted with strange and solemn music;—Prospero stands invisible in the distance, while various groupes of spirits enter, bringing in a banquet;—they dance about, with gentle actions of salutations, and, inviting the king, and the rest to eat, they depart;—Ariel appears, and, amidst the noise of thunder and lightning, the banquet vanishes. Ariel informs Alonzo and his party of

his business, and, under their fear and amazement, he bids them remember.

That you three,
 From Milan, did supplant good Prospero,
 Expos'd unto the sea, (which hath requit it)
 Him and his innocent child: for which foul deed,
 The powers *delaying, not forgetting*, have
 Incens'd the seas, and shores,—yea, all the creatures,
 Against your peace.

Ling'ring perdition, shall step by step attend
 You, and your ways.

In this passage, an instructive lesson is conveyed, and a warning held out to those, who, like Alonzo and Anthonio, amidst the machinations of wild ambition, and surrounded by that wealth and power, often obtained through deeds of cruel oppression, seldom reflect, that the unforeseen events of human life, not unfrequently, bring about a retribution of justice, which generally leads to their destruction.

Prospero praises the gentle Ariel for his dextrous power, and says,

My high charms work,
 And these, mine enemies, are all knit up
 In their distractions; they now are in my power;
 And in these fits, I leave them, whilst I visit
 Young Ferdinand, (whom they suppose is drown'd)
 And his and my lov'd darling.

The good and virtuous Gonzalo, though amaz'd in beholding these frightful appearances, endeavours

to amuse his companions, by telling them to be of good cheer, for those sights, only reminded him of the tales he had heard when a boy. Alonzo and the others, however, are influenced by different feelings—terror and dismay prevail—and we behold them, suffering under all the troubles of wicked men, driven desperate, from the recollection of their guilt. The scene closes, with a terrific description from Alonzo, of what he felt, through the workings of a troubled and guilty conscience:—

O, it is monstrous ! monstrous !
Methought, the billows spoke, and told me of it ;
The winds did sing it to me ; and the thunder,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc'd
The name of Prosper.

The fourth Act opens with a most pleasing and delightful scene, in Prospero ratifying his promises, by giving, to Ferdinand, his beloved Miranda;—the language, upon this occasion, is pregnant with sentiments, of the most lovely and delicate nature, and, as Prospero wishes to give the young couple, a specimen of his art, we have the splendid imagination of Shakspeare, called forth, in all its grandeur and beauty. Ariel's incantation, in the scene with Alonzo, created spectres of a fearful appearance ; but, here we have the Magician, bestowing upon Ferdinand and Miranda, every thing, that can please the eye, or captivate the mind ;—the conception, surpassing in beauty,

All that Poet ever feign'd, or Painter drew.

To celebrate the contract of true love, the vision displays the spirits Ceres, Juno, and Iris, who each, in a strain of composition, distinguished for pastoral simplicity, delicacy of feeling, and great beauty, compliment the lovers, and extend to them, their benedictions—

————— That they may prosperous be,
And honor'd in their issue.

This lovely scene, terminates with a graceful dance of Nymphs, and Reapers, — the whole vanishing on a sudden, amidst which, Prospero is seen, under all the influence of violent passion, leaving Ferdinand, with his Miranda, in wonder and amazement. Prospero takes the opportunity of soothing Ferdinand, and repeats that well-known beautiful passage, which, for its sublimity, has never been excelled.

You look, my son, in a mov'd sort,
As if you were dismay'd : be cheerful, sir,
Our revels now are ended : these our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air ;
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve ;
And, like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind !—We are such stuff,
As dreams are made on, and our little life,
Is rounded with a sleep.

These reflections, replete with magnificence,

are the indications of a great mind ;—the emotion of anger, which Prospero discovers towards the termination of the vision, proceeding from the recollection of Caliban's plot, perhaps, led him into that train of feeling, as to look upon the insignificance of all human affairs, in the view, which has just now been described. It has, however, been observed, that the plot of Caliban, was a circumstance, not sufficient to move a man like Prospero, into that gust of passion, by which, he was influenced ; but, Dr. Warburton, very justly remarks, that, if we look more narrowly into the case, we shall have reason to admire our author's wonderful knowledge of nature. " There was," says he, " something in it, with which great minds, are most deeply affected, and that is the *crime of ingratitude*." Prospero probably, was under the impression, that Caliban was ungrateful, and which, combined with the recollection of his brother's conduct, would, very naturally, affect a generous mind, with the most bitter anguish.

In many of his plays, Shakspeare seems, not to have studied that scenic effect, which the Greek tragedians were passionately fond of, nor to have relied upon the success of his dramatic skill, like some of the moderns, to the pomp and splendour of stage exhibition ;—his scenes are often so comparatively diminutive, that, in representation, the effect is much obscured ;—it is in the closet, however, where intellectual enjoyment is more frequently found, by the perusal of those pages,

which tell us, with what truth, our poet could delineate the feelings and passions of the human heart;—when we take into consideration, the circumstances under which Shakspeare wrote, when the playhouse, of his time, was little better than a barn, without any adventitious aid, to produce, to his unlettered audience, any thing like scenic grandeur, we need not wonder, that many of his plays are deficient in these advantages; yet, notwithstanding those defects in dramatic arrangement, his genius has overcome every obstacle, as we, in the present day, have witnessed the power, by which he was guided, when his brilliant fancy, led him to display, what is considered, the beauty and elegance of stage exhibition. No one, therefore, who has lately seen this scene of the vision, where Ferdinand and Miranda receive the complimentary adulation of the spirits, Ceres, Juno, and Iris, but must have done homage to the unrivalled fame of Shakspeare; at the same time, feeling deeply impressed, with the noble exertions of Mr. Macready, who, in his splendid and beautiful exhibition of the *Tempest*, has given us, a strong proof of the excellence of his judgment, in connection, with a classic taste, which will ever reflect, upon him, the highest honour;—by an unparalleled devotion to the works of this great poet of nature, Mr. Macready has deservedly won the applause, and gained the esteem of his country.

The last scene of the fourth act, brings us the

re-appearance of Caliban, and his two drunken companions; and the same drollery and comic humour prevail, which characterize all Shakspeare's delineations of low comedy. There is, however, an expression of Caliban's in this scene, which I cannot omit, as I believe it has been passed over, without notice, by the numerous commentators upon the writings of Shakspeare. Caliban, in leading Stephano and Trinculo, to the cell of Prospero, with the intent of murdering him, their attention is occupied, by finding the garments, belonging to Prospero, a prize, not to be overlooked, by the two drunken sailors;—Caliban, enraged at the delay, which this circumstance creates, reproaches his associates, and tells them,

We shall lose our time,
And all be turn'd to barnacles, or to apes,
With foreheads villanous low,

an observation, which seemingly has never been adverted to, though it evidently corresponds, with the science of Phrenology, of the present day, the general principles of which, were well known to the ancients; Shakspeare seems likewise to have been aware of these principles, and to have understood, what is now generally admitted, that the capacity of intellect, in different animals, depends upon the particular formation of the brain. The same knowledge is also displayed by our poet, in the play of Hamlet, where the young prince, in speaking of the likeness of his father, uses these words,

The front of Jove himself. (¹⁰)

The fifth, and last act, opens with Prospero appearing in his magic robes, saying to his spirit Ariel,—

Now does my project gather to a head,
My charms crack not, my spirits obey, and time
Goes upright with his carriage.

Prospero asks Ariel,

How's the day?

who replies,

On the sixth hour, at which time, my lord,
You said our work should cease.

Shakspeare had met with much censure from the learned Ben Johnson, and other fastidious critics of his day, in not adhering, in his plays, to the unity of time, in the composition of which, he was guided by no antecedent laws; the model of the Grecian stage was, to him, no beacon, and, forsaking all the established rules of Aristotle, his wild poetic imagination, luxuriated in the regions of nature, unfettered by the learning, either of ancient or modern times,

Existence saw him, spurn her bounded reign,
And panting time, toil'd, after him in vain.

We have however, in the play of the Tempest, the most strict observance, with regard to these unities, and our author, not only here, but in other parts of the piece, particularly alludes to this,—shewing, as

a commentator, very justly observes, “that Shakspeare, notwithstanding the satire of his contemporaries, could write a play, within all the strictest laws of regularity, the fable scarcely taking up, a greater number of hours, than are employed in the representation.”

Prospero, hearing from Ariel, that the king, and his followers, are still prisoners,

In the lime-grove
Which weather fends his cell,

gives orders, to relieve them ; but, not before, he exhibits some fine touches of feeling, for their afflictions, displaying every noble and generous sentiment, though, by their grievous wrongs, he had been deeply injured.

The feelings of humanity are here so affectingly touched and the nobleness of remission upon repentance so finely depicted, that I cannot refrain giving, in full, the sentiments of Prospero, conveying to us a beautiful proof, how far the mind of Shakspeare, rising by degrees to the summit of all human virtue, exceeds, in moral feeling, any thing which is to be found in ancient or modern times.

Ariel says to Prospero,

The king,
His brother, and yours, abide all three distracted
And the remainder mourning over them

Brimful of sorrow and dismay ; but chiefly
 Him that you termed the good old lord Gonzalo ;
His tears run down his beard like winter drops
From eaves of reeds : your charms so strongly works them
That if you now behold them, your affections
Would become tender.

PROSPERO. Dost thou think so, Spirit ?

ARIEL. *Mine would. sir, were I human.*

PROSPERO. And mine shall.

Hast thou which art but air, a touch, a feeling
 Of their afflictions? *and shall not myself*
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
Passioned as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?
 Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the
 quick ;
Yet with my nobler reason, 'gainst my fury
Do I take part. The rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance. They being penitent,
 The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
 Not a frown further.

The accomplishment of his designs being nearly realized, Prospero wishes to abjure his potent art, and break those charms, which the powers of his enchantment gave him.

I'll break, *says he*, my staff,
 Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
 And deeper than did ever plummet sound,
 I'll drown my book.

With these intentions, Prospero introduces that remarkable speech, commencing,

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves ;

which, from its allusion to the popular stories concerning the power of magicians, conveys to

us, a very high idea of Shakspeare's knowledge of the enchantments, which prevailed among the ancients:—this speech, besides possessing great poetical beauty, has given rise to much observation, regarding the learning of Shakspeare. In my remarks upon the play of the Merchant of Venice, when alluding to this subject, I was then disposed to believe, from the style and idiom of Shakspeare's writings, that he had an intimate acquaintance, with the Latin, and had studied closely, the peculiar construction of that language; various passages, in the Tempest, prove his knowledge of the poetry of Virgil and Ovid; Mr. Holt affirming, that the beginning of the speech, above alluded to, is nearly copied from the last mentioned poet;—the original lines are,

Auroæque, & venti, montesque, amnesque, lacusque,
Diique omnes nemorum, diique omnes noctis adeste.

This opinion of Mr. Holt is supported by Mr. Pope, and a host of other authors, the latest of whom, in our day, is the learned and ingenious Dr. Macginn, who, in an article, which appeared lately in Fraser's Magazine, displays much classical erudition, in behalf of the scholastic learning of Shakspeare;—volumes, however, have been written, with an attempt to prove our author's entire ignorance of the ancient classics, and that he derived his acquaintance with the originals, through translations alone: amongst the number of those, who contend that Shakspeare had never perused the Latin authors, and that his knowledge

of Roman events was only obtained through books, then translated into English, are to be found the names of Suckling, Denham, Dryden, the celebrated Dr. Johnson, and more lately the author of that excellent piece of biography, in the second volume of the Cabinet Cyclopædia, conducted by the Rev. Dionysius Lardner, a work, which, though adverse to the question of Shakspeare being a learned scholar, nevertheless throws more light, in a condensed form, upon the history of our illustrious bard, than any production, which has yet appeared.

We have now arrived at the denouement, of this beautiful drama, which conveys to our view, a scene of the most pleasing and agreeable kind ; Prospero, with a mind, endowed by all those high and exalted qualities, which render man, in the possession of such attributes, a being truly magnificent, draws from us every feeling of admiration ;—we see in his character, the human heart influenced by every virtuous and noble sentiment ; but, when we behold the opposite picture, in the base treachery of Alonzo and his companions, we lament, that such degeneracy, should be found, so prevalent amongst mankind : there is virtue, in the world, but, alas ! vice has ever had the predominance, and to find out truly the cause of such moral evil, has, as yet, baffled the enquiries of philosophy ;—there is one consideration, however, which should not be overlooked ;—man never yet has enjoyed in states, which are called civilized, the

full extent of those advantages, that Nature has given to him ; the powers of his intellect crippled, and the qualities of his heart obscured, by false and narrow views of education, he has been, in all ages, the victim of corrupt prejudice, combined with low and selfish ignorance, which have greatly been the means of perpetuating those wars, intestine broils, and bitter malignant passions, that have sullied and disgraced his character.

The magic charms of Prospero being about to dissolve, the spirit Ariel re-enters, bringing with him Alonzo, attended by Gonzalo ;—Sebastian and Anthonio, are also seen, accompanied by Adrian and Francisco : they all enter a circle, which Prospero had made, and here Prospero takes the opportunity of paying, to the good Gonzalo, that tribute of praise, which his virtues demanded. To Alonzo and Sebastian, he offers the most severe reproaches for their cruelty to him, and his daughter ; while to Anthonio, his brother, who had, from his mind, expelled remorse and nature, he nobly says,

I do forgive thee,
Unnatural though thou art.

Unable still, however, to discover Prospero, with amazement, they stand, in their guilty condition. Ariel is told by the Magician, to bring from his cell, his hat and rapier, and bidding the spirit quickly visit the king's ship, and bring with him the Mariners, with the Master and Boat-

swain, to his presence, Prospero stands before them, undisguised in his true character of the Duke of Milan !

Embracing his noble friend Gonzalo, Prospero bids him and his company, a hearty welcome, whilst Alonzo, under all the feelings of wonder and astonishment, implores pardon, and resigns the dukedom—⁽¹¹⁾ Anthonio and Sebastian are reminded of their treachery ;—amidst the troubles and perplexities of these events, Alonzo seeks from Prospero the particulars of his preservation, how he came to the island, and begs some tidings of his dear son Ferdinand,—Prospero replies,

————— 'Tis not a chronicle of a day,
Nor a relation for a breakfast,
Befitting this first meeting.

and invites Alonzo to the entrance of the cell, where Ferdinand and Miranda are seen playing at chess—the scene becomes deeply interesting, Alonzo discovers his son, whilst Miranda, pleased and amazed, exclaims—

O ! wonder !
How many goodly creatures are there here !
How beauteous mankind is ! O, brave new world
That has such people in't !

Ferdinand tells his father, that the lovely maid is his, and daughter

To the famous Duke of Milan,
Of whom, so oft, he had heard renown.

Gonzalo invokes the blessings of the Gods upon the happy couple, and Alonzo, in his extacy, says,

Give me your hands,
Let grief and sorrow still embrace his heart,
That doth not wish you joy.

Ariel re-enters with the Master and Boatswain, who relate the safe condition of the ship,

———— Which but three glasses since,
They saw wreck'd.

Prospero bids Alonzo not infest his mind, with the strangeness of this eventful story, as he assures him, he shall shortly resolve unto him, all its accidents;—Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo appear with their stolen apparel, which, amidst the gravity of the scene, creates much merriment. Prospero, with his usual generosity, pardons them, and then, addressing himself to Alonzo, invites him and his train,

To his poor cell
To take their rest for the night,

assuring them that in the morn,

———— He'll bring them
To their ship, and so to Naples.
———— To see the nuptials,
Of these our dear belov'd solemniz'd,
And thence retire me to my Milan, where
Every third thought, shall be my grave.

The mild and gentle Ariel, is dismissed to the elements to be free; and this interesting scene,

closes, by Prospero, promising, “ calm seas, and auspicious gales ; so, that all may reach in safety, their destination.

Though some cold and fastidious critics, have found fault with this play, and have considered it, altogether, a meagre production, I, setting aside, the censure of such false criticism, must offer my tribute of praise, in looking upon it, as the most perfect of all our poet's productions ;—being amongst the latest of his efforts, the powers of his great and intellectual mind, seem to have been here condensed, so as to give to mankind, a work, which time will never destroy ; for, whether, we contemplate, the moral of the tale,—the beauty of the composition,—the lofty and exalted sentiment,—the deep display of human action, in combination, with the knowledge so agreeably related, concerning the popular stories of superstition, both ancient and modern, it will ever be regarded as an imperishable monument, of Shakspeare's fertile, sublime, and original genius.

APPENDIX.

NOTE 1, PAGE 5.

Shakspeare, in Macbeth's address, to the Ghost of the murdered Banquo, gives a strong illustration, how far the mind of man, endowed with great courage, may be altogether subdued, under the belief of supernatural agency, though at the same time, it is here imagined, that the terrible object, which the ambitious tyrant saw, inspired him with that horror, which a sense of his crimes awakened ;—

————— What man dare, I dare.

Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or Hyrcan tyger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble ; or, be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword ;
If trembling I evade it, then protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, terrible shadow ;
Unreal, Mockery, hence !

Superstition, which has often destroyed the energies of the bravest soldier, has also swamped, and laid waste, the human mind, even amidst the calm and peaceful inquiries of philosophy ;—the false and erroneous views of religion, which superstition has engendered, impeded, in a lamentable degree, in former times, the progress of science ;—Tycho Brahe, distinguished for his glorious discoveries in Astronomy, was deterred from the further pursuit of his studies, by unhappily imagining, that to persevere with them, he would be guilty of impiety, towards the Deity ; and Swammerdam, the celebrated Dutch anatomist, in an evil moment, when under the same fanatical influence, committed to the flames, the records of years, which, it is said, has deprived the science of anatomy, of many facts, connected with the physiology of man, that his laborious investigations had discovered.

NOTE 2, PAGE 6.

Mr. Walpole observes, that “ there is not the least suspicion, that the folio, under the name of James I., is not of his own composition, for, though Roger Ascham may have corrected or assisted periods of his illustrious pupil, no body can imagine, that Buchanan dictated a word of the *Demonologia*, or of the polite treatise, entitled ‘ A Counterblast to Tobacco.’ Quotations, puns, witticisms, superstition, oaths, vanity, prerogative, and pedantry, the ingredients of all his sacred majesty’s performances, were the pure produce of his own capacity, and deserving all the incense offered to such immense erudition, by the divines of his age, and the flatterers of his court.” The folio, Mr. Walpole alludes to, consists of several tracts, and which contain an attempt to prove, that monarchs have a right to be absolute and independent

of their subjects ; on the heinous sin of taking tobacco ; on witchcraft, &c., &c.

NOTE 3, PAGE 6.

See the collection of criminal trials for Scotland, published at Edinburgh, by the celebrated Hugo Arnot.

NOTE 4, PAGE 8.

“ The *Tempest*, one of the most splendid efforts of human genius, was doubtless founded on some Italian novel, though that novel has eluded the research of the most diligent commentators. Some of the thoughts appear to have been taken from Greene’s *Alphonsus*, and certainly the names of some among the characters are derived from other sources. But how insignificant the aggregate of all, compared with the noble work which Shakspeare has left us ! There is more invention in this piece, than in any other of his dramas.”—*Dr. Lardner’s Cabinet Cyclopædia*, 2 vol *Biography*.

NOTE 5, PAGE 17.

The red-plague, here alluded to by Caliban, has been by Steevens, and other commentators, considered the Erisepelas, a supposition, perhaps, altogether erroneous ; as this disease seldom prevails in the form of an epidemic, and is always confined to a local part of the system. In all probability, the red-plague was that species of scarlatina, (scarlet fever) now classified, by nosologists, under the term cynamche maligna, a disease, which was never

well understood, among medical writers, till the middle of last century, when Dr. Fothergill first gave an accurate description of it. About the period (1748) when this excellent physician directed his attention to cynanche maligna, it prevailed to a great extent in London, as an epidemic, and proved fatal to many; among the number, were a portion of the family of the Duke of Newcastle, a circumstance, which gave to the disease, at that time, the term of the Pelham sore throat.

NOTE 6, PAGE 23.

This state of equality is, in our day, advocated by an extensive body in this country, who are denominated socialists;—their doctrines are very widely promulgated, and have lately gained much notoriety, from the circumstance, of Mr. Robert Owen, their great leader, having been introduced to the Queen, through the auspices of Lord Melbourne; such a distinction conferred upon the Coryphæus of this new system, has led some to consider, that his opinions have, indirectly, met with the sanction of royalty, while his schemes, being apparently patronized, by the prime minister of her Majesty's whig cabinet, joined to the recollection, that they were confidentially approved of, by the late Sir Robert Peel, Bart., as also the Duke of Kent, and other distinguished individuals, have given an impetus, and importance, to the principles of the New Moral World, that have produced no small degree of excitement, through all classes of society. The bench of spiritual peers, in this state of affairs, have become alarmed;—and, under the dread which, it is said, these humble disciples of the primitive doctrines of Christianity experience, of losing hold of the revenues of a church, more rich and powerful, than all the other

ecclesiastical establishments in Europe, the *pious* Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, has very strenuously called upon the legislature, to check the progress of socialism ;—denouncing its tenets as blasphemous and immoral; amidst such conflicting events, the calm observer, can only come to the conclusion—we live in strange times !

NOTE 7, PAGE 27.

In the edition of the works of Shakspeare, printed at Edinburgh, 1769, the following observations are made on “The Winter’s Tale,” when alluding to Polixenes, *King of Bithynia*.

The country here called *Bithynia* hath, in former editions, been printed *Bohemia*, an inland kingdom, situated nearly in the centre of Europe; whereas many of the great incidents of the play turn upon its being a maritime country, of which Polixenes was the king. This is a blunder, and an absurdity, of which Shakspeare in justice ought not to be thought capable: and as he hath turn’d quite anew, the story contained in the old paltry book of Dorastus and Faunia, [the book from which Shakspeare is supposed to have taken the plot] changing most of the main circumstances, and all the names of the persons; it is probable he removed the impropriety, and placed the scene in *Bithynia*, which the ignorance and negligence of the first transcribers, or printers, might corrupt, and bring back again to *Bohemia*, by a less variation, in the letters, than they have been guilty of in numberless other places of this work.

NOTE 8, PAGE 27.

The first collection of Shakspeare’s plays was published, in 1623, seven years after the period of his death;—Professor Porson and Mr. Upcott, however, in their examination of this edition, found *three hundred and forty-seven literal mistakes*.

NOTE 9, PAGE 29.

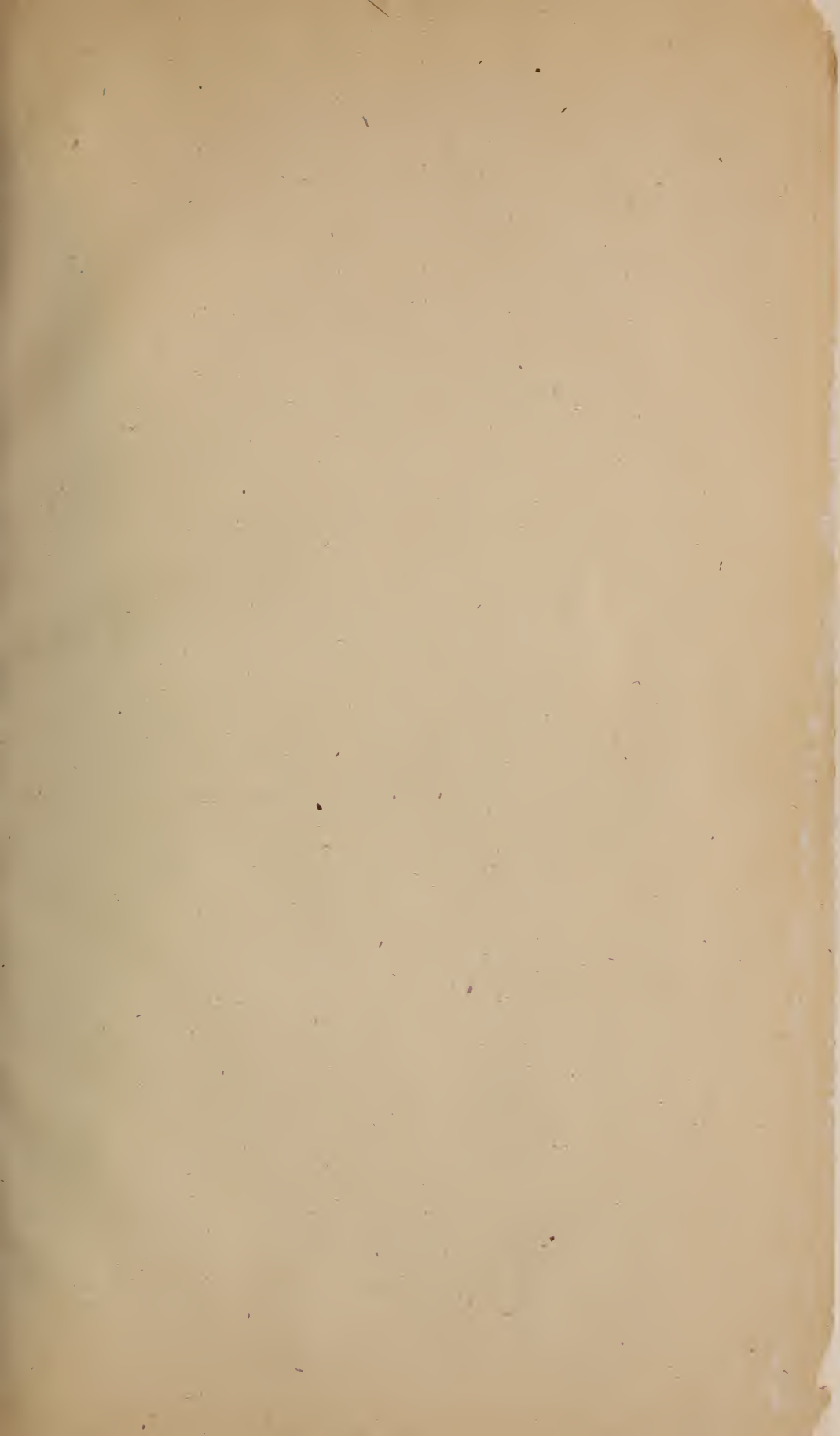
See various remarks, on the morality of Shakspeare, in the Biography of early dramatic authors, volume 2nd of Dr. Lardner's Cyclopaedia.

NOTE 10, PAGE 42.

An author, more than a century ago, commenting upon these words, "The front of Jove himself," says, that they are an allusion to the description of Phidias' Jupiter from Homer, a circumstance which proves that phrenology was known to the ancient sculptors, and which has not been overlooked by Shakspeare.

NOTE 11, PAGE 49.

"Thy dukedom I resign."—The duchy of Milan being, through the treachery of Anthonio, made feudatory to the crown of Naples, Alonzo promises to resign his claim of sovereignty for the future.—*Steevens*.



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